

Workplace Traffic Safety

This is Road-Safe Workplace, an electronic newsletter about workplace traffic safety from the Vermont Department of Labor because the number one cause of death and injury in the workplace are traffic crashes.

Road-Safe Workplace has been created to distribute statistics, facts, and other materials to help employers create, maintain and improve their workplace traffic safety programs. Please use this information in your company newsletters, bulletin boards, or employee e-mail memos. Your thoughts and comments are always welcome.

However, if you do not wish to receive Road-Safe Workplace, please reply with the word "unsubscribe" in the subject line.



Multitasking Driving Calls for High Tech Solutions

Think cell phones are the only gadgets in the car causing bad driving? Think again. MP3 players, satellite radio, personal digital assistants, DVDE players and mapping tools are quickly becoming common accoutrements of the modern car. And, for some that means drivers have more buttons, keypads and click-wheels to twiddle with while navigating the road. Safety concerns have resulted in regulation and legislation, but voice activation is also becoming a viable solutions for some automakers. Read the full article at: http://news.zdnet.com/2/2100-9595_22-6029403.html.

New Jersey Looks To Toughen Laws on Cell Phone Use In Motor Vehicles

New legislation in New Jersey would allow law enforcement personnel to stop motorists who fail to use hands-free cell phone devices, or who engage in other unsafe activities while operating a motor vehicle. The bill would upgrade the offense of using a wireless telephone while driving to a primary offense, and would levy a \$100 fine on any motorist who engages in other inherently distracting activities that interfere with a driver's ability to operate a vehicle.

Cell Phone Use on the Rise

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has released a Traffic Safety Facts Research Note that shows that cell phone use increased in the United States in 2005, with 6% of drivers on hand-held phones in 2005 nationwide compared to 5% in 2004. The results are based on a National Occupant Protection Use Survey. For more information, visit: <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pdf/nrd-30/NCSA/RNotes/2005/809967.pdf>.

Failure To Remove Ice & Snow From Vehicle Could be Illegal in Pennsylvania

Legislation has been introduced by a Pennsylvania state lawmaker that would fine drivers for failing to remove ice and snow from vehicles. The proposed bill would permit police to pull over drivers whose vehicles are not cleaned of snow and ice. The legislation gained momentum following the death of a woman driver who was instantly killed when ice fell off the roof of a tractor-trailer in front of her. The truck driver continued driving, unaware of what happened and has since not been identified.

Motor Vehicles Living Longer

A new report, issued by NHTSA shows that typical passenger cars are now surpassing 150,000 miles on the road, while pickups, SUVs, and vans are crossing the 180,000-mile mark. A report issued eleven years ago said most passenger cars exceeded 125,000 miles each year and light trucks drove more than 150,000 miles in the same time frame. The report found that, in terms of years, passenger cars are lasting longer, while SUVs and other light trucks are not running as long as before. The report said nearly 79% of 10-year old passenger cars are still on the road, up seven percentage points for comparable vehicles in the 1995 data.

Safety Technology Has Its Limits

Automakers have installed an array of hardware and software to increase safety, but devices have limits, according to a recent report by Business Week. Safety devices may not work as advertised due to human error or poor driving behavior. Consider anti-lock brakes. According to Business Week, drivers with anti-lock brakes engage in higher instances of tailgating, speeding, and sudden lane changes. Some safety experts suspect that many middle-aged and older drivers don't know how to use anti-lock brakes.

Compact Cars Earn New Distinction: Highest Fatality Rate

Drivers might love them for their low gas mileage, but according to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), compact cars have the highest fatality rate. Compact cars had a fatality rate of 17.76 people per 100,000 vehicles in 2004, followed by compact pickup trucks with 16.87 and subcompact vehicles with 16.85, according to a report by NHTSA. Large vans had the lowest rate, 9.34, while pickup trucks and sport utility vehicles had rates of about 15 deaths.

A Few Statistics – Perhaps Enough For Some To Sit Up And Take Notice

- * Nationally in 2002, the Service Industry led all non-fatal injuries nationally with 27.3% of all injuries reported. The Wholesale and Retail Sector was second with 27%, while Construction accounted for 23.3%, and Construction had 9.3% of all injuries reported.
- * In Vermont in 2002, there were 11 preventable workplace deaths, while more than 21,000 worker's compensation claims were filed with an average cost of \$8,523 per claim.
- * In Vermont in 2003, the total claim cost was \$112-million.
- * Nationally in 2004 more than half of the 5,000 workplace fatalities were motor vehicle crashes. There were a total of 42,000 motor vehicle crashes in the US in 2004.

In all of this, consider that safety is money – money in the bank. For each dollar spent on workplace safety, \$3 to \$10 is saved. Companies need to make the commitment (with direction from the owner or CEO) to invest time and money in safety over the long term.

Motor vehicle crashes are the primary cause of workplace deaths (NIOSH), and result in the costliest lost time claims (NSC).

Employer Guidebook to Reduce Traffic Crashes

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), and Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) have joined forces to create the 32-page ***Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes***. The guidebook offers useful information to help employers design an effective driver safety program in their workplace. It features a 10-step program outlining what an employer can do to improve traffic safety performance and minimize the risk of motor vehicle crashes. The document includes success stories from employers who have benefited from effective driver safety programs.

The booklet is available to employers from: njames@labor.state.vt.us. Ask for the *Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes*. The booklet will be sent in the mail, so be sure to include your mailing address.

Inattention, speed, driving while impaired, disregard for stop signs and traffic lights, and failure to yield the right of way are the major causes of crashes on our highways.



**REMEMBER -- BUCKLE YOUR SEATBELT
EVERY TIME!**